



The ACURIL Conference opens on Monday at the Aruba Resort, Spa & Casino

The Association of Caribbean University, Research and Institutional Libraries will hold their annual conference in Aruba this year starting on Monday, May 29, as was announced by Mrs. Astrid Britten, president of ACURIL 2005-06 and Managing Director of the Biblioteca Nacional Aruba. During a press conference on Tuesday afternoon, May 23 at the host hotel, the Aruba Resort, Spa & Casino, Mrs. Britten along with Mrs. Lourdes Cores, ACURIL Conference Coordinator informed the press of the schedule of events and speakers for the upcoming conference. Registration and Opening ceremonies will take place the Sunday before the commencement of lectures along with special sessions of the Board of Directors. The theme for this year's event is "Information and Human Rights," which will examine the social, cultural and ethical aspects of a modern "Information Society." Organizers expect over 250 multi-cultural participants and will welcome information specialists from the English, French, Spanish and Dutch speaking Caribbean. The five-day conference offers a busy schedule of workshops, lectures and entertaining events, including musical nights from noted musician Carlos Bislip that focus on the history of Aruba through the development of its traditional music. During the conference, an art exposition by some of Aruba's most noted female artists will take place at the Cas di Cultura, also.

Daily lectures feature keynote speakers that work in the varying languages of the conference. Starting Monday with Cees Hamelink of the Free University of Amsterdam and Bruno Ollivier of the Université des Antilles et de la Guyane, Martinique. They will speak on "Information and Human Rights: Perspectives for the 21st Century" and "Cultural Diversity in the Information Society" respectively. Tuesday will offer a lecture by Daniel Pimienta from Funredes, Dominican Republic on the topic "Linguistic Diversity in Cyberspace." On Wednesday, Jose Luis Aquirre Alvis of the Universidad Catolica Boliviana "San Pablo" Bolivia will speak on "The Free Flow of Information and Access to Knowledge Sources in the Information Society." The final lecture by a keynote speaker will be on Thursday on the topic of "Children's Right to Information" by Marian Koren, European Bureau of Library Information and Documentation Association (EBLIDA) The Netherlands. On Friday, member libraries will make their presentations, and the General Assembly will take place.

The thrust of this year's conference is concerned with the new digital era and the consequences of the rapid developments in ICT as regards the information profession. The conference will focus on the social and ethical aspects of the "Information Society," and the question of how information professionals can insure freedom, equality and safety, the three underlying principles of the Declaration of Human Rights in how they can be respected in this developing information society.

ACURIL was established in 1967, includes thirty-five member countries, and the first conference was held in 1969. The program of workshops and lectures enhances the skills of information professionals from libraries, archives, and schools in conducting programs in their various institutions that will assist in the learning process for students and individuals throughout the Caribbean. ACURIL was formed because of the unique multi-language and multi-cultural aspects of the Caribbean nations, providing a forum where information specialists can share the rich panorama of information and literature that such an environment has to offer. This conference will stimulate the sharing of professional experiences in support of a broad spectrum of intellectual and educational endeavors, and promote cooperative activities in particular in regards to the way present technology is affecting how we retrieve and use information. What information is being disseminated, and how it will influence learning and cultures, is of great concern because as the use of the Internet as an "information highway" is increasing prevalent, so is the power of disinformation and negative propaganda. The diligence of information specialists is essential in preserving and protecting understanding and tolerance for the multi-cultural society, an important concern, and topic of this year's conference. For more information about the conference and individual events, contact Gina Jie-Sam-Foek, at 582-1580 or visit their website www.acuril2006@biblioteca.nacional.aw.